

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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R 121543Z MAR 75
FM USMISSION GENEVA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1317
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION USNATO

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CSCE, PFOR, XG

SUBJECT: CSCE: SOVIETS PRESS FOR SHORT EASTER RECESS AND ESTABLISHMENT OF WORKING GROUP ON STAGE III

REF: STATE 44031

1. SUMMARY: FOLLOWING A BRIEF VISIT TO MOSCOW BY SOVIET
DELEGATION HEAD KOVALEV, SOVIETS LAST WEEK MADE UNUSUALLY
STRONG EFFORT TO REDUCE EASTER RECESS TO ABSOLUTE MINIMUM,
AND PRESSED HARD FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF WORKING GROUP ON FINAL
DOCUMENTS AND STAGE III. DESPITE HEAVY SOVIET PRESSURES,
USDEL FOLLOWED REFTEL GUIDANCE AND SUPPORTED EC-9 POSITION ON
STAGE III WORKING GROUP IN PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS WITH SOVIETS,
WHO SEEM SATISFIED WITH FINAL OUTCOME ON THIS SUBJECT.
HOWEVER, IN WAKE OF SUBSTANTIAL SOVIET CONCESSIONS ON
PEACEFUL CHANGE ISSUE, AND TAKING INTO ACCOUNT OUR SOMEWHAT
HIGHER PROFILE ON BASKET III, WHICH CAUSES US TO OPPOSE
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SOVIETS ON SOME SENSITIVE ISSUES, WE THOUGHT IT DESIRABLE

TO MAKE SOME LOW KEY EFFORTS TO HELP FINAL COMPROMISE
SOLUTION ON EASTER BREAK. KOVALEV THANKED US WARMLY FOR
OUR ROLE ON THAT ISSUE. END SUMMARY.

2. SOVIET DELEGATION HEAD KOVALEV VISITED MOSCOW DURING THE
PERIOD FEB. 28 - MAR. 4. WHEN HE RETURNED TO GENEVA A WELL-
INFORMED SOVIET DELEGATE TOLD US KOVALEV HAD BEEN INSTRUCTED
TO SPEED UP THE WORK OF CSCE. UPON HIS RETURN, KOVALEV
IMMEDIATELY TOOK A PERSONAL INTEREST IN NORMALLY ROUTINE
DISCUSSION OF NEXT FOUR WEEK WORK PROGRAM, (COVERING PERIOD
MARCH 10 - APRIL 11) AND REPLACED THE USUAL SOVIET REPRESENTA-
TIVES ON THIS SUBJECT WITH DEPUTY DELEGATION HEAD DUBININ.
MAIN POINTS AT ISSUE WERE ESTABLISHMENT OF WORKING GROUP ON
FINAL DOCUMENTS AND STAGE III, AND DURATION OF EASTER RECESS.

3. ON ESTABLISHMENT OF WORKING GROUP ON FINAL DOCUMENTS
AND STAGE III, SOVIETS PRESSED HARD FOR A CLEAR COMMITMENT
IN SOME FORM TO SETTING UP A WORKING GROUP WITHIN THE NEXT
FOUR WEEKS, AS PROPOSED TWO WEEKS AGO BY SWEDES (GENEVA
1167). EC-9 POSITION WAS THAT IT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE TO
BEGIN DISCUSSION OF THESE SUBJECTS, BUT THAT DEBATE SHOULD,
FOR THE TIME BEING, CONTINUE IN COORDINATING COMMITTEE. IN
ACCORDANCE WITH REFTEL INSTRUCTIONS, WE SUPPORTED EC-9
POSITION ON THIS ISSUE, EXPLAINING TO SOVIETS THAT, WHEN ALL
DELEGATIONS FELT TIME WAS RIGHT, WE WOULD BE FLEXIBLE ON
MODALITIES FOR THIS DISCUSSION. RESULT WAS THAT FOUR EXTRA
MEETINGS WERE ALLOTTED TO COORDINATING COMMITTEE DURING NEXT
FOUR WEEKS FOR CONTINUATION OF DISCUSSION OF SWEDISH PROPOSAL.
GIVEN MOOD OF WESTERN DELEGATIONS, WE WOULD EXPECT AT LEAST
TACIT AGREEMENT TO ESTABLISHMENT OF A WORKING GROUP ON FINAL
DOCUMENTS AND STAGE III DURING THE NEXT 2-3 WEEKS.

4. SOVIETS MADE A STRENUOUS EFFORT TO HAVE NO EASTER RECESS
WHATSOEVER. POSITIONS OF EC-9 AND NATO DELS WERE SOMEWHAT
AMBIGUOUS, AND ALTHOUGH MOST SAID THEY COULD BE "FLEXIBLE,"
THEY SEEMED TO WANT AT LEAST A SHORT BREAK. HOWEVER, SMALLER DELS
(E.G. PORTUGAL, MALTA) ARGUED FOR A LONGER RECESS, AND NEUTRALS
PROPOSED A "COMPROMISE" (RECESS FROM MARCH 21 - APRIL 1) WHICH WAS
UNACCEPTABLE TO SOVIETS. KOVALEV HIMSELF RUDELY REJECTED ALL FUR-
THER COMPROMISE SUGGESTIONS, AND DEPUTY DEL HEAD DUBININ APPEALED
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TO US DEL ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS DURING SOMETIMES ACRIMONIOUS WEEK-
LONG MARATHON DEBATE BETWEEN SOVIETS AND OTHERS FOR ASSISTANCE ON
WHAT
SOVIETS CONSIDERED A POLITICAL ISSUE OF CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE.
IN RESPONSE TO SPECIFIC SOVIET REQUESTS, WE ENCOURAGED
PORTUGUESE DEL (WHICH ALONE PREFERRED A TWO WEEK RECESS) TO
MODIFY THEIR EXTREME POSITION, AND ASSISTED SWISS IN FINDING
FINAL COMPROMISE SOLUTION UNDER WHICH CONFERENCE WILL RECESS

FROM MARCH 27 TO AFTERNOON OF APRIL 1, WITH ONLY BASKET II AND III MEETINGS DURING WEEK BEFORE EASTER. KOVALEV AFTERWARDS THANKED US WARMLY FOR OUR HELP.

5. COMMENT: IN DECIDING TO HELP SOVIETS ON RECESS ISSUE, TO WHICH THEY OBVIOUSLY ATTACHED GREAT IMPORTANCE, WE TOOK INTO ACCOUNT FACT THAT WE WERE CONCURRENTLY OPPOSING THEIR POSITION ON ANOTHER PROCEDURAL POINT (STAGE III WORKING GROUP), WHICH THEY ALSO REGARDED AS IMPORTANT SYMBOLICALLY, AS WELL AS ON TWO KEY BASKET III ISSUES (JOURNALISTS PAPER AND HUMAN CONTACTS INTRODUCTION). IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, AND IN WAKE OF SOVIET CONCESSIONS ON PEACEFUL CHANGE, IT SEEMED APPROPRIATE TO BE MILDLY HELPFUL TO SOV DEL DURING DEBATE ON EASTER RECESS. DALE

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